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SEP 6 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Your Memorandum of August 13 Concerning a
Committee to Backstop SALT Negotiations

The President has reviewed your memorandum of August 13. He agrees that it is desirable to establish suitable means for handling day-to-day backstopping of the SALT negotiations within the Government. The President wants existing NSC machinery to be utilized. Accordingly, he has directed that the day-to-day support for our delegation be coordinated through the mechanism of the Under Secretaries Committee of the National Security Council. Policy issues will be put before the National Security Council.

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Henry A. Kissinger

NSS, DOS reviews
completed.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON
August 13, 1969

#11923

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Committee to Backstop SALT Negotiations

Recommendation

That you approve the establishment of the interagency committee set forth below to backstop the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.

Approved _____ Disapproved _____

Discussion

During the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks it seems important that we have a flexible central mechanism to coordinate the backstopping of the negotiations. I know that you will wish to oversee the basic course of the negotiations and I believe that the present National Security Council framework should be used for arriving at fundamental policy decisions.

There will, however, be a continuing need for coordinating the interagency day to day backstopping of the negotiations on tactics and on some of the less important substantive instructions that will be required. I believe it is desirable, therefore, that we have a central body to function below the Presidential level for this purpose. Such a group could also be useful in the final preparations prior to the opening of negotiations. Such bodies have been formally established for disarmament negotiations since 1958 and similar less formal arrangements have existed since 1952.

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I would propose, therefore, that the Secretary of State bring together a committee; under his chairmanship, of the relevant department and agency heads to fulfill this function. The committee would be composed of the following: The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, the Science Adviser to the President, and the Director of the U.S. Information Agency would be included in meetings dealing with questions of particular relevance to them.

Secretary Laird, Mr. Smith and General Wheeler concur in this proposal.


Acting Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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ACTION

August 15, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Elliot Richardson's Proposal for a Committee to
Backstop SALT

In the attached memorandum to the President (Tab B), Richardson proposed establishment of a Committee chaired by the Secretary of State to coordinate interagency day-to-day backstopping of SALT and to play an unspecified role in the final preparations before the opening of SALT. The existing NSC "framework" would be used for fundamental policy decisions.

As Richardson notes, this proposal reverts back to the Committee of Principals system used in past administrations, since Stassen, for backstopping disarmament negotiations.

It seems to me that within the present NSC system, the Under Secretaries Committee is well equipped to handle the day-to-day implementation of basic policy for SALT, insofar as this needs to be done by a committee at all. More substantive problems requiring new policy decisions at the highest level would, presumably, be handled through the Review Group mechanism. Given the existing mechanisms, I can see no reason for instituting a new committee structure solely for the backstopping of SALT.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the attached memorandum to the President recommending that the existing Under Secretaries Committee be charged with handling day-to-day implementation of your policies with respect to SALT. (Tab A)

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8-27-69

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger (5)

SUBJECT: Procedures for Backstopping SALT Talks

In the attached memorandum to you (Tab A), Elliott Richardson suggests that for handling tactical problems and other less substantive issues in connection with the SALT talks, a new Committee be established under the chairmanship of Secretary Rogers and composed of the following: the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, the Science Adviser to the President, and the Director of the U. S. Information Agency would be included in meetings dealing with questions of particular relevance to them.

This is essentially the same proposal made earlier by State with respect to Vietnam policy. Its practical consequence is to circumvent the NSC and nullify its procedures. The sole difference between the proposed committee and the NSC is your participation. It is a bad idea to put you into the position of having to make the decision of what is policy and what is operational in a forum in which you might have to overrule the Secretary of State. Adoption of this scheme would, in effect, nullify the NSC.'

RECOMMENDATION: That the operational monitoring of SALT be vested in the Under Secretaries Committee which is chaired by Elliott Richardson. Policy issues would remain with the NSC.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

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